



Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey

NEWSLETTER

Issue No: 12

25 May 1981



Fascist Evren greets Sir Ian Gilmour

by Stan Newens, MP

From the 27th to the 30th April Sir Ian Gilmour, Lord Privy Seal, paid an official visit to Turkey — the first minister from any Western Government to visit the country since the right wing military coup of the 12th September 1980.

According to Turkish newspapers, this official visit covered 3 fields: "the aid of £15M that Britain will give to Turkey, the progress of relations between the two countries, and the aid that had been thought of being given to Turkey within the EEC." (*Hürriyet*, 28 April 1981)

As regards the £15M aid referred to, the headline in this same article read: "Britain To Give Turkey 15 Million Sterling in Military Aid". The nature of at least part of this aid to the generals' fascist junta was given by *The Times* on 8 May 1981: "Britain's contribution comes in the form of £3.5M worth of ammunition and communications equipment". Thus the British Government is supplying aid to enable a reactionary military

junta, comparable with that of Pinochet in Chile, to suppress the Turkish people.

Sir Ian's reception was according to all reports cordial, especially as it represented such important Western economic and military support and accompanying political support. He had discussions with Prime Minister Admiral Bülent Ulusu, Foreign Minister İlder Türkmen, as well as with Head of State General Kenan Evren.

Ever since the coup last year the junta has been engaged upon a process which can only amount to the establishment and consolidation of a military fascist system in Turkey. This has involved a crushing attack on working class organisations like the DİSK trade union confederation, whilst attempting to incorporate its "yellow" rival TÜRK-İŞ (founded by the US AFL-CIO) within the state. TÜRK-İŞ General Secretary Sadık Şide is now Minister for Social Security: the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (to which is



affiliated the British TUC) intends to suspend TÜRK-İŞ if Şide continues in this post. All political parties have been banned. The leaders of the major existing political parties including even the right were placed in detention and have been banned from holding office in the future (Ecevit, RPP and Demirel, Justice Party).

Despite the present campaign to make use of centenary of the birth of Atatürk in order to glorify the junta, the Party he founded, the RPP, has been prevented along with the parties of the left from any legal activity. To assist in suppressing the opposition, the fascist junta has "banned strikes and abolished collective bargaining ... launched a systematic campaign to curtail trade union activity ... the more radical left-wing union DİSK has felt the Generals' 'Iron Heel'. ... The Generals have suspended DİSK, arrested its leaders and many, if not most of them, have been subjected to torture. ... The entire country is under martial law and under curfew. ...

(continued on the next page)

Evren greets Gilmour

(from front page)

Martial law commanders have been given a virtual free hand ... and they enjoy virtually unlimited powers. ... According to official figures there are about 26,000 people in jail ... prosecutors have asked for 850 death penalties ... already over 20 people are known to have died in custody since the coup." (Financial Times, 18 May 1981). Imprisonment, torture, hangings and shootings are being used to destroy the will to resist together with real working class organisations; attacks against the Kurds are also being stepped up.

It is of course true that prior to the coup there was open terrorism in Turkey, which is to be deplored whether initiated by right or left. However, the character of the right wing terrorist organisations has sadly been illustrated in the West by the attempt on the life of the Pope by a member of the notorious Grey Wolves.

It is against the background that we must view Sir Ian Gilmour's official talks in Ankara and İstanbul. There are being justified on the grounds that they were "appalling circumstances" prevailing before the coup. The facts are that before the coup there was 120% inflation, 20% official unemployment and fascist murder squads were killing 20 people every day. It is hardly surprising that retaliatory violence was undertaken by some of the left though some of the progressives were opposed to this.

By assisting Turkish capitalism's attempt to solve its problems by recourse to military fascism, the Conservative Government is acting in a way that must be totally deplored by the British labour movement. Sir Ian Gilmour's talk about "an early return to democratic movement" is an excuse to justify support for a regime which must be condemned in the same way as the Chile junta.

The British Labour movement must express its full solidarity with all the peoples of Turkey who are struggling to restore democracy in Turkey and totally condemn the Thatcher Government's support for this regime.

Stan Newens is Labour MP for Harlow.

The fascist attack on the Pope - UTPB clears the air

A Turkish fascist attempted to assassinate the Pope in 13th May 1981. When Ağca escaped from a top security prison in November 1979 he indicated that the sole aim of his escape was to kill the Pope. He tried to achieve this aim 1,5 years later.

Evidence of Ağca's connections with the fascist NAP was given after he escaped. Although he claimed to be aligned neither to the left nor to the right all his solicitors were either sympathisers or members of the NAP. Another person involved in the murder of A. İpekçi is an established fascist in İstanbul. It was discovered that Ağca had a picture of Turkeş, leader of the NAP, both at his home and in the cell when he was in prison. He also attended a seminar in Malatya three months after he killed İpekçi, where he lectured on the "strategy of the Idealist Movement". Ağca is a fascist.

Ağca, however, is not an ordinary Turkish fascist. At a time when Turkey is being discussed in the Council of Europe and attentions is drawn to the question of torture in Turkey, the shooting of the Pope, as well as Ağca's killing of İpekçi, imply connections with the Turkish Secret Police (MIT).

Evren is attempting to use the shooting to divert the attention of public opinion from the terror of the fascist junta is applying in Turkey. They are trying to justify their brutal actions against progressives, democrats, intellectuals and trade unionists. They are also trying to portray the entire opposition abroad as terrorists.

These attempts will prove futile. Through the struggle of the people fascism in Turkey will be defeated and democracy established.

DOWN WITH THE FASCIST JUNTA!

*Union of Turkish Progressives
in Britain*

A letter from Turkey

...

I want to write about a statement put around a food and drug factory by the employer. I do not have the statement itself but as I remember the content is as follows;

1. All the transport subsidies have been cancelled (there is no bus service to the factory, the transport subsidy was paid to a few senior workers).

2. Lunch will be available at our factory (when it started it was seen to be only a cup of soup).

3. The wages will be increased. The rate of increase will be justified by the employer according to the education and seniority of worker, the importance of the work done by the worker, the difficulty of the work, age etc.

4. The amount of increase and allowances will be changed according to the situation of the firm.

5. No one must tell the other how much increase he has been given since this might cause difficulty.

6. Workers who do not find the wages satisfactory have the natural right to leave the factory.

I think the attempts of the fascist junta to force the workers to join

TÜRK-İŞ applied in organised factories. In a few factories like ours, this has not been seen yet. They might be thinking that since there has been no union then why introduce one.

The policies of the fascist junta give pain to lots of people one way or another. They are imposing organised state terror over the people by saying they are clearing the country from terrorism. There is no one who does not oppose the terror of the junta in one way or another.

I have been told about an event. It is as follows:

It is about the driver for a kindergarten. The driver who took the children to school every morning did not turn up for three days. Just before they started to look for a new driver he came back. He explained, swearing about gendarmes, that he was driving, had been given a signal to stop but did not see it and went on his way. After a while they caught him and tortured him in the police station, saying "you anarchist, you were running away, admit it". They kept him under detention for 3 days.

Now the driver is saying that he will help any "anarchist" to escape in the future.

İstanbul

The trials against the members of DİSK

by Nick Blake

When the Turkish military seized power in September 1980, many, if not the most, section of British press responded more in apparent sorrow than anger, that these unfortunate events were inevitable given the violent period of civil unrest that had preceded the coup. General Evren's military council was presented as a sort of benign policeman, intent only on persuading the military groups of the left and the right from shooting each other, before restoring power to the civilian authorities. These theses have now been clearly shown to be lies. Perhaps nothing is more revealing about the ideology and future intentions of the military regime in Turkey than the trial, or multiplicity of trials, of the members of the left-wing confederation of trade unions DİSK. The DİSK trials demolish all pretence that the military are only concerned to restore a public order situation that a civilian constitution had been unable to deal with. They reveal quite plainly that it is the intention of the present authorities to eliminate militant trade unionism from Turkish political life.

The DİSK confederation is a comparatively recent one, being founded only in 1967. By September 1980, however, it had recruited some 500,000 thousand workers, which is a very substantial proportion of the total working class of Turkey. It fought militant battles to preserve the purchasing power of the wages of Turkish workers; its leading members were assassinated by right-wing groups, it organised demonstrations in support

of workers' unity and against terrorist violence. The DİSK confederation represented the growing voice of the Turkish working class. It is for this, and for this alone, that its members now face potential death sentences.

An attempt was already being made in the civilian courts to abolish DİSK before the military coup of September. Despite the provisions of the Turkish constitution that guarantee freedom of association and the right to organise in trade unions, the İstanbul public prosecutor was attempting to argue that the organisation of May Day parades and the support for strike activity was illegal. With the coup, however, these allegations were gratefully taken up by a military council anxious to find any excuse to eliminate independent action by workers. DİSK was banned by administrative decree. All strikes were declared illegal. 2,000 DİSK members were taken into custody and the maximum period of pre-trial detention was raised from 14 days to 90 days. During this period interrogations took place and inhuman and degrading treatment was applied to the various suspects. The fruit of this violation of international legal standards is now a whole series of trials against the members of DİSK and the confederation itself with charges ranging from insulting the military (for which one left-wing journalist was recently sentenced to 18 years imprisonment) through to conspiring to bring about the ascendancy of one class over another. This last charge (derived from Mussolini's

fascist penal code of the 1930's) carries a potential death penalty.

For too long, the workers movement in the West made no response to these mounting outrages. The lie that the military were only concerned with the suppression of terrorism served to prevent urgent enquiry and investigation of the true facts. Now the position is changing. I was able to visit İstanbul in January and acquire first hand information. Recently a representative of the European Trades Union Congress has completed a visit and filed a highly critical report. In the last few days Arthur Davidson, QC, MP has been to İstanbul on behalf of the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers to enquire into the various judicial measures. It is plain from the reports of all these observers that trade unionism in any real sense of the word is being eliminated in Evren's Turkey. Instead a corporate state structure is being imposed where the level of wages is decreed by the state and independent actions is made illegal. In a speech made in January of this year, General Evren equated economic and social agitation with terrorism and went on to say that he would pass laws preventing trade unions from holding property and having recreational and communication facilities. The trials against DİSK that are being conducted at present are all part of this process of eliminating the most active elements of the Turkish working class. It is the responsibility of the labour movement in Great Britain, and throughout all of western Europe, to ensure that this does not happen.

Nick Blake is a Barrister and Executive member of the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers.

Council of Europe kicks out junta reps

By 51 votes to 48 the Council of Europe decided on 14 May to expel Turkey's representatives. Despite the pleas of the representatives of the fascist junta their record on torture, human and labour rights convinced the majority. Promises by İltan Türkmen (Foreign Minister in Turkey) on the spot in Strasbourg — promises

about a constituent assembly some time this autumn — could not win the day. Nor did the attempt on the life of the Pope by a Turkish fascist "on the run" from Turkish authorities sway the Council in favour of the fascist junta.

The decision is welcomed by all democrats, by all who wish to bury the

fascist junta in a groundswell of massive popular anger. It now remains for Turkey to be expelled completely from membership of the Council of Europe and other democratic forums. The fascist junta must feel the just disgust of anti-fascists everywhere.

Sponsors to date include

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NUFTO Hall,
 14 Jockey's Fields,
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Congress of the CDDRT

Our Congress on Saturday 6 June 1981 will take place nearly nine months after the generals took over in a fascist coup on 12 September 1980. In that time the fascist nature of the junta has been confirmed, representing as it does the interests of finance capital, of which the armed forces of Turkey are in fact part through the Armed Forces Mutual Assistance Fund, OYAK.

In those 9 months, CDDRT has held public meetings around Britain: in parliament, in union halls, in student unions and elsewhere. We have gained wide support and sponsorship from local and national trade union organisations (such as the Yorkshire NUM, TGWU and NUPE) and various Constituency Labour Parties.

In addition, through the work of individual supporters at national CND, Chile Solidarity, El Salvador and unemployment events we have gained further individual affiliates.

Our own Leeds to London March in the month of March attracted valuable solidarity and increased general public awareness of the struggle against the fascist junta in Turkey, a topic ignored by the media.

This year we organised three separate, successful pickets of the Turkish Embassy in London. The latest picket was on Thursday 14 May to protest the start of another trial of DISK trade unionists and the attempted murder of the Pope by a Turkish fascist.

Our list of sponsors (part of which appears above) includes many MP's, MEP's and other prominent individuals. Given that fascism has yet to consolidate itself in Turkey, all who read this *Newletter* must ask what they can do to help the struggle to defeat it. As a first step you can affiliate to CDDRT and get your organisation (if any) to do so, too. Secondly, you can take part in our work: attend our Congress, build CDDRT locally, and distribute its material. It costs only £1 to attend CDDRT Congress.

Let's make this Congress a success!

Let's ensure that fascism is destroyed in Turkey!

Jim Moody,
 General Secretary CDDRT

Congress affiliations

Congress delegates' names and addresses:

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Organisation:

Congress delegate fee(s) (£1 per delegate) enclosed £

Affiliation to CDDRT

Help fight the barbaric regime in Turkey. Affiliate to the Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey (CDDRT). Cost of affiliation for one year: National organisations £20 (can be negotiated), local organisations £5, individuals £2.

Name:

Address:

Send to: CDDRT, 29 Parkfield Street, London, N1 Tel: 01-226 3401. (Make cheques or postal orders payable to CDDRT).